



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## First Sunday in Advent

November 28, 2021



### When the Lord Comes Near, He Humbles Himself

What would it be like to meet God? We know he is almighty and holy. He loathes sin. No wonder that when God appears to his Old Testament people, their first response is typically terror. But when Jesus Christ came into our world, he hid his glory and power. He humbled himself so that sinners would be drawn to him rather than driven away in fear.

### The Propers

*The Propers are those portions of the service that change (or, are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.*

#### **First Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      Jeremiah 33:14-16

Again and again the Lord had promised blessings for his people, if they would only obey his commands. Yet generation after generation had turned away from the Lord and sought self over Savior. When Jeremiah heard the Word of the Lord he was experiencing the wrath of the Lord carried out on rebellious Judah. To the faithful, come words of promise: Justice will be carried out on the wicked and there will be deliverance. The line of David will continue as a “righteous branch” sprouts. He comes to restore the desolate land and the decimated people. He comes to bring peace and safety. He comes to bring life. Therefore he will be called “the Lord Our Righteousness.”

#### **Second Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

The Apostle Paul met the righteous branch of David face to face; he saw the promise of “the Lord Our Righteousness” fulfilled. Therefore he exhorts the Thessalonians and all believers - those who know the Christ’s deliverance from sin - to continue living lives of faith and hope in the promise that the Lord Jesus will come again to bring us to eternal life.

#### **Gospel of the Day**<sup>1</sup>                      Luke 19:28-40

Our humble King comes in majesty. For he comes to do the will of the Father. He comes to bring salvation, righteousness, and peace: peace in heaven and glory in the highest! He came as the fulfillment of scripture, as the answer to mankind’s problem, as the Hope for all the true Israel of God. On this day, the king would have his praise, from the stones if necessary. Behold the King had returned to his own city to win peace and salvation for all.

#### **Psalm of the Day**                      Psalm 24

The Lord Almighty enters into Zion, and those whose sins have been washed away join together in celebration. We lift up our heads as we see our salvation approaching

#### **Verse of the Day**                      Zechariah 9:9

“See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey.” God’s prophecy through Zechariah of a coming king was fulfilled when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Zechariah tells Jerusalem to rejoice when the messianic King comes to her, because he will have with him the righteousness she needs and the salvation she craves.

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Hymn of the Day

2 “Savior of the Nations, Come” (Ambrose, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

Originally written (in Latin) by the great fourth century theologian, Ambrose (and later translated into German by Martin Luther), this hymn was designated for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day – a fitting choice due to its focus on the miracle of the incarnation.

## Church Year Season<sup>1 & 2</sup>

Advent

While most of the world marks the passage of time from January through December, Christians have kept their own calendar for centuries. This Christian year is a way of remembering key events in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

In Advent, the first season of the Church Year, the Word of God bids us prepare for the coming of Christ. The readings for Advent have this urgency to them: Since he is surely coming again in judgment, we desperately need for him to come to us first in grace. For without that coming in grace we will perish at his coming in judgment. The Prayer for the Day on each Sunday in Advent is especially beautiful, worth repeating perhaps in the sermon introduction or highlighting in the worship folder. These ancient prayers were said by many of the faithful even during the week when children would take turns reciting them as they lit the candle(s) on the Advent Wreath.

The threefold focus of Christ’s coming to us is as follows:

- Jesus arrived once as a baby in Bethlehem, coming near to humanity to save us. Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas.
- Jesus arrives here among us today through his Word, in Holy Baptism and in Holy Communion, to forgive us and strengthen us.
- Jesus will arrive in glory at the end of this world. We look forward to that day with excitement because Jesus has already come and prepared us for it.

## Colors & Symbolism

Advent: Blue

The traditional color for Advent is purple. Advent is a penitential season of preparation for Christmas; thus the color purple which symbolizes sorrow and repentance (along with royalty). Since another theme of Advent is hope and anticipation, the color blue (the sky) has come to be used in many churches to symbolize the believer’s hope and expectation of Jesus’ Second Coming.

## Traditions & Customs<sup>2</sup>

The Advent Wreath

A tradition of the Advent season is the lighting of candles on a wreath. Each light reminds us of Jesus, the Light of the world (John 8:12). Each Sunday we light an additional candle, providing a visual countdown to the celebration of Christ’s birth. On Christmas Eve we light the center candle, remembering Jesus’ nativity and the light and life that he brings (John 1:4,9).

## Minor Festivals

St. Andrew, Apostle (November 30)

Andrew and John were the first apostles to follow Christ (John 1:35-40). Andrew told his brother, Simon Peter that he had found the Messiah (John 1:42), and both were later called by Jesus to be “fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). Tradition states that Andrew was martyred (perhaps on November 30<sup>th</sup>) on a special kind of cross (in the shape of an “X”) which has ever since borne his name. St. Andrew’s Day has been observed by the Christian Church as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

## Nain Paraments

Advent

Superfrontal: “Come Lord Jesus” is the Advent (meaning “coming” or “arrival”) prayer of Christians who await Christ’s promised return (Revelation 22:7,12,20) on the Last Day (Revelation 22:17,20), and who desire to eagerly receive Jesus now in the Gospel. The stars are representative of the Church’s anticipation of Jesus’ return when he will “appear in the sky...with great power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). The stars also remind us of God’s creative work. They especially remind us of Jesus, the bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16) and Light of the World (John 8:12) who came to save us from the darkness of sin and death.

Lectern antependium: Chi (X) and Rho (P) are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (Χριστός). This ancient symbol represents Jesus and his office as the Messiah, the anointed King of kings and Savior of the world (Matthew 16:16).

Pulpit antependium: Alpha (A) and Omega (Ω) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author; Jonathan E. Schroeder, Editor.

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.

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